### A New York Summer Mystery Story of Smuggled Jewels-and a Dictograph

# THE BLUE BUCKLE

(A Complete Novel Each Week in The Evening World

## By William Hamilton Osborne

PERS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XXII. The Strawberry Vender.

XACTLY sol" replied Craig. then!" cried Miss Arany, irritated by his sang-"But I warn you beforehand that, when you get through, I shall have something to say-and perhaps also the man who owns this house!"

"The net is closing in around Heldorman," answered Craig. At least three different cases are being rounded up against him. This jaunt to

"Mow by fraud? The papers and evidence were in our possession—the stormed, but a frightened look had come into her eyes.

"Now I think your bitterness is as "Now I think your bitterness is as misplaced as was your loyalty, awhile age," Craig eaid, drily.

"Oh, of course you think so! Miss Ballentyne has but to simper with those big, babyish, brown eyes of hears, and crook her little finger, and you immediately dance attendance!"

"That may be," retorted Graig: "Why?" She looked at him with the frankness of a child. "Because I wanted to see you again. "Why?" She looked at him with the frankness of a child. "Because I wanted to see you again. I wanted to tell you how you hurt me when you dismissed me — the last time," he said with perfect sincerity. "Will you sit down?" she asked, indicating a chair just opposite the desk. "I must again apologize for utilizing this study as a reception room, but we have found that the other room needed have found that the other room needed

ally, her eyes flashing.

"Tell me, Miss Arany," he said, coking her straight in the eyes:

what is Mr. Helderman to you?"

"For three years he has been—

"What is Mr. Helderman to you?"

'For three years he has been—
everything!" she answered defiantly.
"Still, you cannot be married to
him. Your husband abroad"—
It was a chance shot, but again it
told. She changed color and retorted angrily:
"He was poor—commonplace! What could be offer me in comparison with
Helderman?"

done for him—after all I know!"

"Yet I am sure that he is making
"Yet I am sure that he is making
sumed an indulgent tone, and never
sumed an indulgent tone, and never
once throughout the interview could
Rutherford said this with a show
his vice have been heard in the adhis voice have been heard in the ad-

"Then if he called again?"—
"He will not do so!" The woman said it with the positive assurance

"I shall do so. Miss Arany—with your assistance."

"With my assistance—yes! No one shall say that Irene Arany is a doit and a fool—a mere plaything to be cast aside."

"I have not said that, iMss Arany," said Rutherford, the utmost consideration in his tone. "But I will say this—you are being made a tool of, and you don't know it! While you sit at home here looking after that—well, that alibi or double of his—Mr. Helderman is amusing himself else—bers and laughing at you for being "The safe deposit box containing"

"Is that the only reason, little princess?"

"It is a very great reason, Mr. Helderman, and you have it in your power to grant me a very great favor," "Would my reward, then, be—very great?" he responded, his eyes glow-ing.

"The victor can sometimes afford to be generous," she fenced. "Just now the question is, will you help me?"

"In what way, little princess?"

"In what way, little princess?"

"The safe deposit box containing

Vo. NO!" she screamed, in a perfect frenzy of rage. "He would not dare! I'll give you one chance to prove it. Craig Rutherford; and if you do not make and kill you!"

#### CHAPTER XXIII. The Silent Listener.

and Billie Ballantyne had just finished completing a toilet of unusual care. The effect, however, did not altogether satisfy her, and she put two cold, nervous hands into the warm, strong grasp of Miss Olmstead. There was something so sympathetic and motherly about Miss Olmstead that the lonely girl had taken her to her heart at once.

Seven though they have been setured by fraud. The fraud cannot be cured by fraud. The fraud cannot be apparently devoted the girl was, how much she had meant in those days of anxiety and loneliness. "Sophie was in your employ, then!" Helderman laughed. "One cannot take too many precautions!" he said. "But you did not come over on the same boat with me because you wanted to see me; it was because of the bushel? And yet you call that taken her to her heart at once." It was beth: I will be honest. But

taken her to her heart at once.

"I wonder why I was such a long time finding you!" she exclaimed impulsively to the older wonan.

Miss Olmstead stroked the soft cheek, with a touch that was almost cheek, with a touch that was almost fancied that you—cared for me—a wistful. This was just the sort of girl she would have liked to call "The actress slumbers in every hear" and why we were such a long to me a shrinks into nothing beside you, you, "It would be impossible to describe that she information that she love!"

"It was both; I will be honest. But each time I saw you it was you alone of whom I thought. The buckle only represented so much money. Money —bah! I make it by the handful, and only the means to an end—but it shrinks into nothing beside you, you, "I would be impossible to describe

time finding each other," she an-

wared.

The front door bell rang; and Billie, already overstrung, grew all of a tremble.

"Oh, I wonder if I can. Will I do? Do I look very nice?" she exclaimed, turning to face ber image in the glass and once more making a litte grimace at the reflection.

Miss Olmstead made no immediate reply. She was thinking that if she only had her youth back, and looked half so charming as the radiant girl in the glass, she could ask no more. Nevertheless, Billie's discriminating gaze went from one detail to another of the elaborate toilet, and at each inspection she was not altogether pleased.

"Oh, dear! I never were to make

pleased.

"Oh, dear! I never wear so much jeweiry! I never look so fussy! But, you see, I must dress the part, you see, I must dress the part, mustn't I? Do I look like an adventuress? Do I look bold and wicked, and as if I would betray my friends for money?" she asked, anxiously.

"No, net quite that," replied the truthful Miss Olmstead. "I should say that you looked like a debutante just on the threshold of some brilliant social success; one whose youth and good looks and ambition might spur her on—to anything!"

Billie clapped her hands like a delighted schoolgirl.

"That's better than looking like an

"That's better than looking like an adventuress, isn't it?"

A strange servant girl, an honest-looking mulatto, appeared at the door. Sophie had decamped in tears and high dudgeon; and Mise Oimstead had secured a maid-of-all-work to supply the need.

"A gentleman, ma'am," she said, presenting his card.

Billie flashed down the stairs like a creature of light and energy. She swept into the study, as though she eagerly anticipated the visit of its occupant.

"It is too late to try to make me believe that, Miss Arany! Let us try to devise other ways and means."

"For what purpose?" she demanded.

"To save yourself. I have some influence with the authorities and Miss Ballantyne"—

"Miss Hallantyne—bah! What do I care for that presumptuous baggage or har father? If I had those papers and they would save his life I wouldn't turn my hand over!"

"Helderman, his eyes glowing as they rested upon her, rose and greeted her with old-rehool courtesy. None could do this with better grace than he.

"I am obedient, Miss Hallantyne, you see, he said, and bowed again.

A much less observant man than he must have been struck by the elaborate or har father? If I had those papers and greeted her with old-rehool courtesy. None could do this with better grace than he.

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A much less observant man than he must have been struck by the elaborate or her father? If I had those papers or her father? If I had those papers and the said and began to chart the said and the said and began to chart the said and the said and

lantly.
"Why?" She looked at him with the lenged.
"How?"

"I must again a pologize for utilizing this study as a reception room, but we have found that the other room needed doing over entirely. You know, when one of these old houses begins to fall to pieces it goes in chunks. That is what the celling of the room downstairs did!"

He laughed at her naive description and seated himself, while she sat just a few feet away. Then he deliberately drew his chair still deliberately drew his chair still closer, so that the horns of the wicked-looking Rocky Mountain goat on top of the desk seemed to threaten him with bodily injury.

Helderman's attitude was arrogant, like that of a conquery director.

lelderman?"
"But suppose now that Helderman like that of a conqueror dictating terms. He had pursued this proud, terms. He had pursued this proud, terms. He had pursued this proud."
"He will not dare—after all I have self-possessed young woman long, and only he knew the secret of her

"Making love—bah! He makes fun
"Making love—bah! He makes fun
"Making love—bah! He makes fun
"I am glad you chose this room, he
said. "It is so business-like. And
one trait I have always admired in
you is that you can talk—business!"
"Is ability to talk business an admirable trait in a woman?" she
mirable trait in a woman?"

said it with the positive assurance by which one seeks to allay one's private fears.

"You are mistaken," returned Craig. "Helderman is going again, and he is going as an ardent wooer, even a desperate one."

"In some women—when not carried to excess," he replied enigmatically. "I judge, though, that you have had to cultivate the faculty in order to safeguard your own interests—and your father's!"

even a desperate one."

"Prove it!" she cried, her eyes blazing.

"I shall do so, Miss Arany-with alone to-night."

"I shall do so, Miss Arany-with alone to-night."

"The victor of generous," she recommendate the property and other papers belonging to the Ballantyne estate has to been opened, as you know, and I have to reason to believe that all its contents the interest of the law and that there is no way of getting them from you, even getting them from you, even been selected the selected them to deny.

Billie was completely overwhelmed, counter the law and that there is no way of getting them from you, even and in the midst of her depression to she remembered with a little pang de that she had resented it when Crais what she had resented the girl. His intuition had been keener than hers there; but then he could never have known how had meant in those day had meant in those day

clues to the Ballantyne estate in Paris

when Sophie"——
"Then she was not—good to me!" the girl said, with a little cry.
"Sweetheart, all women are trick-sters—and most men!" "You think that I am one?"

"You think that I am one?"

You could not help it if you tried, him and retreated to the desk, pressing the heads upon it.

Sophie who first told me that your father had obtained possession of his blue buckle. It was Sophie who planned the attack upon your father in the streets of Paris, hoping to get a reward from me!"

Helderman laughed.

"Little white dove, do you think that I am to be frightened by your world the relation of the held."

could sit and smile as she looked at this remorseless man!

"Tell me," she said softly, purposely evading the answer that his last sentence would demand, "when did you first see me? Was it on board the Gothic?"

Helderman looked about him to make sure no one was within earshot before he answered.

"No, child! It was weeks before that time! Your precious blue buckle and still more precious Sophie first led me to your feet. I had picked up clues to the Ballantyne estate in Paris or hurry, just with that dreadful, including the answering passion.

Know what the word means!

She started up, one desire possessing her, making her forget for the placing persons in the other room to cliesten."

She spoke quietly indeed, so quietwhelming passion.

"Little princess, you cannot go!
You asked me here! I came determined to win you. I mean to have shoulder.

"You laughed at what you called my little trick when the phonograph called up its waraing voice! It was to the start that my father ar-

with his old, quick gases over any superior of the control of the street of the street

have incriminated yourself, nevertheless—almost without any prompting—
certainly without the necessity of Mr. Helderman, without taking into consideration the attempted abduction, to-night. There was the Braine

mined to win you. I mean to have you!"

He uttered the words without noise or hurry, just with that dreadful, inexorable purpose of his, that had made him feared in the world of business.

He had stepped in front of her, and his hands clasped the soft roundness of her arms. She jerked away from him and retreated to the desk, pressing her hands upon it.

"I'm coming up! I just arrived! Just a minute!" called her father's voice from the hall.

Helderman laughed.

"Little white dove, do you think"

"You laughed at what you called my little trick when the phonograph my little trick when the phonograph called up its waraing toke! I was one of the talings that my father arrived to did not the will forbade our living nuder the same roof. Sophie may have told you about that; the did not tell you, evidently, because she did not know, perhaps, that father has always watonel over me, although in another part of the city. He always listens to everything that you said!"

Helderman laughed.

"Little white dove do you think"

"You laughed at what you called my little trick when the phonograph calle

\*\*STATE OF THE Ballantyne papers when your possession are according to saw.

"In the Ballantyne papers when your possession are considered with the Ballantyne papers when you have in your possession are considered." The precisely because I do love you have in your possession are not possession are

"Sheer rot" commented the banker.
"I'm not sure about that. The evidence is all tabulated now, and you'll have a mighty hard time to squirm out of it."

"Humph" grunted Heiderman.
In spite of his detestation of the
man, Rutherford watched his amasing self-possession with secret admiration. Heiderman was playing
his oards to the end, and even the
detective seemed to recognize this
fact, for he answered his questions
with unusual consideration.
"Tou still do not seem to realise
what a tight box you are in, Mr. Heiderman," he said. "But I may add
that my own case, the one for the
Government, on which I have been
at work for several months, is prac-

His words seemed to release Hel. an opening.

"Kill them!" besought

The look of hate bore with it a gleam

quite!" she scoffed. "I was merely a Helderman knew the ten useful tool, like Sophie! Well, I "Down, Satan! Down, Loss wasn't through with you—and I'm not cried.

through with you—and I'm not cried.

A strange thing happens once your smugled diamonds were not familiar voice stopped them safe. I show you now that you were thing in it seemed to held the never safe—never safe from me. —for a second—them they are the cried show of him upon simultaneously and with her

And the cruel show of him upon the wall never ceased, or was interrupted for an instant. Steadily she kept the betraying picture at its flendish task. Now the simulated Helderman walked—apparently—to the window—but actually upon the bare wall meant to make him pay dearly for many and looked out. Now it lighted a cigar. Now it sat down and crossed its legs. Now it paced up and down the wall with many a shrug and grimace that its counterpart had assiduously cultivated, for just such a film.

Crowder raised his weapon assignment of the part of

Deconce on the contract of the second of the wire, at some and second or the second of the wire, at some and second or the second of the secon

Helderman beside him.

There on the smooth white wall of the room, opposite the broad window, this other Helderman moved, every detail so like the man who stood chaffing under Crowder's grasp, that Craig's eyes turned confusedly from the one to the other, as if to assure his pussled vision that he actually saw two men.

"By all that's boly!" he burst out at last. "It's a moving picture!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Secret of the Big White Room.

HE three men went down the steps, out of the door and approached the big limousine of the banker, still standing waiting, about the firm waster of the banker, still standing waiting, about the firm steps of the banker, still standing waiting, about the firm waster of the banker, still standing waiting, about the firm steps of the banker, still standing waiting, about the term agreement of the both the standing waiting, about the firm agreement of the base to the two still tackling Helderman below the wast, and threw his opponent between himself and their attack. The beauty charged the banker of the marter of the barder of the marter of the barder of the brutes, he gave a sudden upward heave of his arms, who wast, and threw his opponent beauty the tone.

His words seemed to release Hel-

derman from his thrall of tortured silence.

"Doit! Idiot! Fool!" he screamed. "Crowder had stood with revolver raised, but still dared not shoot, for fear of hitting Rutherford. He littled the weapon and fired into the wall. The dogs whirled at the second and mocked at him from the balcony. It was Irene Arany, taking a cruel revenue for Helderman's change of Canig released his held and elitabled Helderman around the threat.

"Call off your dogs or Fil dashed you!" he should.

"An acomplice of yours, I believe, Heiderman!" observed Crowder dryly, "Yes, she has turned the trick on him for some of his duplicity, with a vengeance!" added Craig.

It was true. Irene looked down on the man she had loved, and whose schemes she had shared, with no shadow of uncertainty in her face.

The look of hate bore with it a gleam

"Breat he destructed one of the first victous snap of the laws. Again he barrly saved himself and the deg. Crowder also had sprung behind the swaying figures for protection from the other brute. Now he was the main.

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